

REMARKS

Claims 1-23 were pending in this application as of the October 22, 2004 mailing date of the current office action, in which claims 1-20 were allowed and claims 21-23 were rejected pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §§102.

As indicated above, claims 21-23 are canceled herein without prejudice. Applicant notes, for the record, that claims 21-23 are canceled herein solely to expedite allowance of this application. By canceling these claims, Applicant does not acquiesce to their rejections, or to the reasons offered by the Examiner in support of such rejections. Also, by canceling these claims, Applicant does not dedicate their subject matter - as filed - to the public. Moreover, Applicant respectfully reserves the right to seek patent protection for one or more claims that are similar or identical to canceled claims 21-23 - as filed - in one or more related applications.

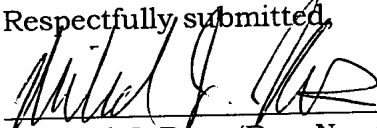
Applicant also respectfully brings to the Examiner's attention the Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement (SIDS) that is enclosed herein. Applicant submits that claims 1-20 are likewise patentable over the references cited in the SIDS.

In sum, this application is believed to be in condition for immediate allowance. If the undersigned can be of any assistance in advancing the prosecution of this case, the Examiner is invited to contact him via the information provided below.

Date: December 28, 2004

By:

Respectfully submitted,


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